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The Oblee

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In this Living Force supplement, Yara Grugara lands a rare interview with crimelord Nirama, who wants to discuss the return of his people - - the Oblee - - to the Cularin system. Is Yara up to the challenge? Wait, don't answer that. Also: Full roleplaying game details and statistics on the mysterious Oblee!

Yara Grugara sits in the middle of an enormous soundstage. Behind her is the viewscreen to end all viewscreens - - twenty meters high and thirty meters wide, and occupied by the image of a stylized "N." Yara twists in her chair, looks up at the N as if expecting it to change, and then turns her attention to the camera.

Yara: Friends, this is Yara Grugara. Today, I have the opportunity to do something I never thought I'd do again. I'm going to interview Nirama, the local crimelord, overseer of scum and villainy in Cularin. While there can be no doubt that Nirama has played a role in recent events in Cularin, he has specifically asked that we focus today's discussion on the Oblee, whom he calls his "people." Being as this was the only criterion Nirama set for doing the interview - - aside, of course, from the interviewer being none other than Yara herself - - and being as Yara's producers really wanted this interview to happen, I've agreed to his terms.

She shifts in her seat, again glancing up at the N. It hasn't changed.

Yara: For security reasons, Nirama won't be in the studio today, but we have a remote connection that should be active any moment. In the meantime, I feel obligated to point out that it is only through the inestimable kindness of Nirama that this interview is possible. In previous interviews, Yara may not have carried herself as professionally as she could. For that, I apologize, both to the people of Cularin, and to Nirama. Or at least, I will as soon as he gets here. Or the connection does. Or whatever it is we're waiting for.

Behind her, the N disappears. It's replaced with Nirama's face. His four eyes blink as one, and he glances down to where Yara is seated, still oblivious that the screen behind her has changed.

Yara: Happily enough, there's only so much groveling he can take before his top eyes start blinking faster than his bottom eyes. I still think that's interesting, but we're not going to mention that in the interview today because the last time I asked him about it, it kind of freaked him out.

Nirama clears his throat. Yara, who has been facing away from the screen,

turns pale. Her eyes go wide and she forces a smile that makes her look like she's about to get an injection of the lethal variety and is trying to think happy thoughts. Slowly, she turns.

Yara: Hi! Gosh, is it nice to see you. Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

Nirama stares at her for a few seconds before nodding. He seems to have been waiting for her to make some vapid comment or other, and looks pleased that she apparently resisted that temptation.

Nirama: Hello. I am pleased to be back on "Eye on Cularin."

He puts a little more emphasis on "eye" than he probably should. Then, for emphasis, he blinks his top eyes, followed by his bottom eyes. It doesn't seem to faze Yara in the least.

Yara: Actually, I don't do that show any more. That's Ryk's, now.

Nirama: Is he not dead yet?

Yara: Not to my knowledge.

Nirama: A shame. Although Nirama must admit, it would be hard to tell. If death is the absence of brain activity, one might speculate that your replacement has been dead for some time.

Yara: True enough. So tell me, Nir. What is it you wanted to discuss?

Nirama: You may call me Nirama. Did we not discuss this before?

Yara: Yeah, but Lan told me that I ought to be more comfortable in my skin when I'm doing interviews. So I'm not going to put on airs. I'll just call people by their nicknames, because hey - - that's who Yara is!

Nirama: My nickname is not "Nir." I am called Nirama. And who is Lan, a producer?

Yara: Beg to differ, Nir. I gave you the nickname in that first interview. Believe you me, I saw it replayed enough that I couldn't possibly forget! As to who Lan is - - well, he's no less than the headmaster of the Jedi Academy. I thought you knew him.

Nirama: Fine. What you call me is of no import. I am here because I wish to speak of my people.

Yara: The smugglers, you mean?

Nirama frowns, the wrinkles in his face deepening. He shakes his head, slowly, and rolls his top set of eyes.

Nirama: My people. My species. The Oblee. Long have they been removed from the galaxy, and now have some of them returned. It is of them that I wish to speak.

Yara: I've heard a little about this. Some big to-do out in the Belt, right? Yara's heard a few stories, but to be honest, she's a little confused by what happened.

Nirama: She can join the club. What happened is not important in its details. What is important is that I am no longer the only one of my kind. Nirama is no longer alone, and this is a powerful, good thing.

Yara: Right. I guess it is. So, what can you tell Cularin about your people? I mean, if they're going to be making their way into our cities, what should we expect? Do they look like you? Do they talk like you? What is it that makes an Oblee tick?

Nirama: There are as many different faces for Oblee as there are for any species. Some will be like Nirama. Some will not. Some will be pleasant, others less so. I have not met many of my kin, so far. I hope to. I hope they will grow to love Cularin in the same way Nirama has come to love Cularin.

Yara: In a way that involves making money?

Nirama's twenty-meter-high face glares down at her. Yara shrinks in her chair, fumbling with the datapad in her lap.

Nirama: You seek to throw my previous interview back in my face, you wampa-furred harlot? Nirama said what Nirama had to say. When you become the leader of an underworld organization, please, tell Nirama how to engender loyalty. Tell him that the best way to encourage so-called "criminals" to follow him in the years after a strategic reorganization is to speak with affection of a star system in which they attempt to skirt what few laws exist. Convince Nirama that this would have been the proper way to speak two years ago.

Yara: So, what's changed?

Nirama: Everything has changed. I have shown force. I have demonstrated my commitment to my organization, and I have demonstrated my commitment to the system in which we live. There are some organizations in which a title is sufficient to garner respect, and too-free use of the title cheapens it. Any herder of nerfs can call himself a "crimelord." To maintain power, one must demonstrate that the title is deserved or, at least, that the power implied by the title is deserved.

Yara: I thought I heard subtext there. Care to elaborate?

Nirama: No.

Yara: Riiight. Anything else you want to say to the people of Cularin? We're a captive audience, after all.

Nirama: Be kind to the Oblee as you are kind to one another. That any of my people have found their way back to Cularin is due almost wholly to Cularin's heroes. Those who have assisted in this matter have my undying gratitude. But do not assume, and do not allow yourselves to be convinced, that any Oblee who transgresses is under my protection. Your kindness should not become foolishness. If an Oblee wrongs you, treat him as you would any

other.